

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video by a video reproducing system so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video depending on a user's age, the method comprising:

setting passwords corresponding to the levels so as to control viewing of the video;  
checking an input password against the passwords prior to reproducing the video;  
determining a viewing level including searching the levels corresponding to the input

password; and

reproducing the video according to the viewing level.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein  
the video reproduction system is a digital video disc (DVD) system, and  
the levels for restricting the reproduction of the video are parental levels in the DVD system.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining of the viewing level further comprises determining the viewing level as a lowest age level in response to the input password not matching the passwords corresponding to the levels.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining of the viewing level further comprises determining the viewing level as an upper level in response to the input password matching more than one of the passwords corresponding to the levels, wherein the upper level is a highest age level among all age levels of the levels corresponding to the input password.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the viewing level determined is reset to a default viewing level in response to turning the video reproduction system off, wherein the default viewing level is one of a lowest age level set by an authorized user and a default age level set by a manufacturer of the video reproducing system.

6. An apparatus for controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video by a video reproducing system so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video depending on a user's age, comprising:

a memory which stores passwords corresponding to the levels; and

a controller which outputs a window to check an input password against the passwords in the memory prior to a reproduction mode, reads information including the levels corresponding to the input password to determine a viewing level from the memory, and controls the reproduction of the video according to the viewing level.

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the video reproduction system is a digital video disc (DVD) system, and the levels for restricting the reproduction of the video are parental levels in the DVD system.

8. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the controller determines the viewing level as a lowest age level in response to the input password not matching the passwords.

9. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the controller determines the viewing level as an upper level in response to the input password matching more than one of the passwords corresponding to the levels, wherein the upper level is a highest age level among all age levels of the levels corresponding to the input password. levels for restricting viewing of the video depending on a user's age to be the level of the highest age in a case where the same passwords are set at two or more levels for restricting viewing of the video depending on a user's age.

10. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the viewing level determined is reset to a default viewing level in response to turning the video reproduction system off, wherein the default viewing level is one of a lowest age level set by an authorized user and a default age level set by a manufacturer of the video reproducing system.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising setting initial conditions for controlling the levels including:

designating a default viewing level to be used as the viewing level in response to one of an elapse of a predetermined wait period, entry of an incorrect input password and non-entry of the input password; and

selecting the predetermined wait period used by the video reproduction system to convert the viewing level to the default viewing level in response to one of a termination of the reproduction of the video and turning the video reproduction system off.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the setting of the passwords comprises, one or a combination of, designating each of the passwords to a corresponding one of the levels and designating one of the passwords to a plurality of the levels.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the reproducing of the video comprises:  
reading reproduction data from the video having a level which is the same or lower than the viewing level determined; and  
reproducing the reproduction data having the same or lower level than the viewing level.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining of the viewing level further comprises determining the viewing level as a default viewing level in response to one of non-entry of the input password, elapse of a predetermined wait period and non-matching of the input password to the one or more passwords corresponding to the levels.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the viewing level determined is reset to a default viewing level in response to one of turning the video reproducing system off and terminating the reproduction of the video.

16. A method of controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video by a video reproducing system so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video, the method comprising:  
setting one or more passwords corresponding to the levels so as to control viewing of the video;

determining a viewing level prior to reproducing the video including verifying an input password against the one or more passwords set in the video reproducing system, wherein the viewing level is a level highest among all of the levels corresponding to the input password in response to the input password being consistent with the one or more passwords, and otherwise determining the viewing level as a default viewing level; and  
reproducing the video according to the viewing level.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the viewing level corresponding to the input password is converted to the default viewing level in response to one of turning the video reproducing system off, the passage of a predetermined wait period and terminating the reproduction of the video.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the setting of the one or more passwords comprises, one or a combination of, designating each of the one or more passwords to a corresponding one of the levels and designating one of the one or more passwords to a plurality of the levels.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the reproducing of the video comprises:  
reading reproduction data from the video having a reproduction level which is the same or lower than the viewing level determined; and  
reproducing the reproduction data having the same or lower level than the viewing level.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising setting initial conditions for controlling the levels including:  
designating the default viewing level to be used by the video reproducing; and  
selecting the predetermined wait period used by the video reproduction system.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein  
the video reproduction system is a digital video disc (DVD) system, and  
the levels for restricting the reproduction of the video are parental levels in the DVD system.

22. A method of controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video by a video reproducing system so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video, the method comprising:  
setting one or more passwords corresponding to the levels so as to control viewing of the video;

determining a viewing level prior to reproducing the video including verifying an input password against the one or more passwords set in the video reproducing system, wherein the viewing level is a level highest among all of the levels corresponding to the input password in response to the input password being consistent with the one or more passwords, and otherwise automatically determining the viewing as a default viewing level; and

reproducing the video according to the viewing level, wherein the viewing level corresponding to the input password is reset to the default viewing level in response to one of turning the video reproducing system off, an elapse of a predetermined wait period and terminating the reproduction of the video.

23. A method of controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video by a video reproducing system so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video, the method comprising:

- setting one or more passwords corresponding to the levels including one or a combination of, designating each of the one or more passwords to a corresponding one of the levels and designating one of the one or more passwords to a plurality of the levels;
- determining a viewing level in response to each instance of turning the video reproducing system on including verifying an input password entered after the each instance of turning on of the video reproducing system against the one or more passwords set in the video reproducing system, wherein the viewing level is a level highest among all of the levels corresponding to the input password in response to the input password being consistent with the one or more passwords, and otherwise automatically determining the viewing as a default viewing level; and
- reproducing the video according to the viewing level.

24. An apparatus for controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video by a video reproducing system so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video, comprising:

- a memory which stores data including one or more passwords corresponding to the levels so as to control viewing of the video; and
- a controller which determines a viewing level prior to reproduction of the video and controls the reproduction of the video according to the viewing level, wherein the controller verifies an input password against the one or more passwords stored in the memory and determines the viewing level as a level highest among all of the levels corresponding to the input password in response to the input password being consistent with the one or more passwords, and otherwise the controller determines the viewing level as a default viewing level.

25. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the viewing level corresponding to the input password is converted to the default viewing level in response to one of turning the video reproducing system off, the passage of a predetermined wait period and terminating the reproduction of the video.

26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the one or more passwords stored in the memory includes, one or a combination of, each of the one or more passwords corresponding to one of the levels and one of the one or more passwords corresponding to a plurality of the levels.

27. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the controller reproduces the video by reading and reproducing reproduction data from the video having a reproduction level which is the same or lower than the viewing level determined by the controller.

28. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein  
the video reproduction system is a digital video disc (DVD) system, and  
the levels for restricting the reproduction of the video are parental levels in the DVD system.

29. An apparatus for controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video by a video reproducing system so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video, comprising:  
a memory which stores data including one or more passwords corresponding to the levels so as to control viewing of the video; and  
a controller which determines a viewing level prior to reproduction of the video, controls the reproduction of the video according to the viewing level and resets the viewing level to a default viewing level in response to one of turning the video reproducing system off, the passage of a predetermined wait period and terminating the reproduction of the video, wherein the controller verifies an input password against the one or more passwords stored in the memory and determines the viewing level as a level highest among all of the levels corresponding to the input password in response to the input password being consistent with the one or more passwords, and otherwise the controller automatically determines the viewing level as the default viewing level.

30. An apparatus for controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video by a video reproducing system so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video, comprising:  
a memory which stores data including one or more passwords corresponding to the levels so as to control viewing of the video; and  
a controller which determines a viewing level in response to each instance of turning on the video reproducing system and controls the reproduction of the video according to the viewing level, wherein the controller verifies an input password entered after the each instance of turning on of the video reproducing system against the one or more passwords stored in the memory and determines the viewing level as a level highest among all of the levels corresponding to the input password in response to the input password being consistent with the one or more passwords, and otherwise the controller automatically determines the viewing as a default viewing level.

31. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method of controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video in a video reproduction system performed by a computer, the method comprising:

receiving one or more passwords corresponding to the levels so as to control viewing of the video;

determining a viewing level prior to reproducing the video including verifying an input password against the one or more passwords, wherein the viewing level is a level highest among all of the levels corresponding to the input password in response to the input password being consistent with the one or more passwords, and otherwise determining the viewing as a default viewing level; and

reproducing the video according to the viewing level.

32. The computer readable medium of claim 31, wherein the levels are included in a data set which comprises a parental table having, one or a combination of, each of the one or more passwords corresponding to each of the levels and one of the one or more passwords corresponding to a plurality of the levels.

33. The computer readable medium of claim 32, wherein the viewing level corresponding to the input password is converted to the default viewing level in response to one of turning the video reproducing system off, the passage of a predetermined wait period and terminating the reproduction of the video.

34. The computer readable medium of claim 33, wherein the reproducing of the video comprises:

reading reproduction data from the video having a reproduction level which is same or lower than the viewing level determined; and

reproducing the reproduction data having the same or lower level than the viewing level.

35. The computer readable medium of claim 34, further comprising receiving the default viewing level and the predetermined wait period used by the video reproduction system.

36. The computer readable medium of claim 34, wherein

the video reproduction system is a digital video disc (DVD) system, and the levels for restricting the reproduction of the video are parental levels in the DVD system.

37. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method of controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video in a video reproduction system performed by a computer, the method comprising:

receiving one or more passwords corresponding to the levels so as to control viewing of the video;

determining a viewing level prior to reproducing the video including verifying an input password against the one or more passwords set in the video reproducing system, wherein the viewing level is a level highest among all of the levels corresponding to the input password in response to the input password being consistent with the one or more passwords, and otherwise automatically determining the viewing as a default viewing level; and

reproducing the video according to the viewing level, wherein the viewing level corresponding to the input password is reset to the default viewing level in response to one of turning the video reproducing system off, the passage of a predetermined wait period and terminating the reproduction of the video.

38. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method of controlling levels for restricting a reproduction of a video so as to restrict viewing of a part or all of the video in a video reproduction system performed by a computer, the method comprising:

receiving one or more passwords corresponding to the levels so as to control viewing of the video;

determining a viewing level in response to each instance of turning the video reproducing system on including verifying an input password entered after the each instance of turning on of the video reproducing system against the one or more passwords set in the video reproducing system, wherein the viewing level is a level highest among all of the levels corresponding to the input password in response to the input password being consistent with the one or more passwords, and otherwise automatically determining the viewing as a default viewing level; and

reproducing the video according to the viewing level.